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## GERMAN

### WHY SHOULD THE TEACHER OF GERMAN HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF PHONETICS?

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If we communicate a thought to our fellow-men and select the means of spoken language, the process which is accomplished can be divided into the following stages: (1) We conceive an idea; (2) we produce sounds by expressing our idea; (3) the sound-waves travel through the air; (4) the ear of another person receives the waves, and (5) the words are understood and the idea is grasped by the other person. Two of these five stages interest us here: the production of sounds by the speaker, and the sounds received by the listener. These two processes form the realm of phonetics, and the latter is therefore to be divided into two groups, namely, (1) the production of sounds—*Lautbildung*; and (2) the analysis of the sounds themselves—*Lautlehre*. These bear the relationship to each other of cause and effect, and cannot be studied separately.

To what extent do these two aims of phonetic studies, the *Lautbildung* and *Lautlehre*, interest the teacher of German? Here I have especially in mind those teachers whose native tongue is not German. Just as English and French are taught in Germany by Germans, English and German in France by Frenchmen, the time will probably come when German will be taught in this country almost exclusively by Americans. The teacher will, in the majority of cases, study the foreign tongue first in this country and, when possible, complete his linguistic training during a longer or shorter stay in Germany. He will learn the language by watching other people who have mastered it, and by practicing it under their supervision.

Whoever wishes to master the pronunciation of a foreign tongue will notice at once that he has to acquire the ability to

produce sounds which are not found in his native tongue. Nobody can deny that this task will be greatly lightened by an accurate knowledge of the conditions under which these sounds are produced. The most accurate knowledge of these facts can in a comparatively short time be acquired by the study of *Lautbildung*, which is the subject of the above-mentioned first part of phonetic science. Furthermore, if the student acquires a definite and accurate knowledge of the sounds themselves, which is the subject of the *Lautlehre* or second part of phonetics, he will be enabled to watch more closely his own utterances in the foreign tongue, and those of others. It is true that many persons have acquired another language without ever having heard of phonetics; but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that a good working knowledge of *Lautbildung* and *Lautlehre* will enable a person to pronounce correctly, and to judge more accurately the pronunciation of others. A phonetic training will therefore help the teacher in achieving a knowledge of the foreign tongue and in teaching it to others. Furthermore, nobody will, in the course of his study, become acquainted with the entire vocabulary of the foreign tongue. The teacher will have to deal in his work frequently with words which he never has heard before, and only with the help of a good phonetic training will he be able to determine the pronunciation of a word which is new to him, by the description supplied to him by the theory of phonetics.

Aside from these merely practical advantages, other features present themselves from the study of phonetics, which are of at least an equal value. Every teacher of German, be his field of work either in the secondary school or in the college, should have a genuine interest in Germanic philology. He should know something about the historical grammar, and continually enlarge his knowledge of the laws and facts which philological research has brought to light. There is no better introduction to Germanic philology than a scientific study of the living language. The same forming factors were at work to build up and change the old dialects which rule the living tongue, and undoubtedly these factors can be more easily studied from the paradigms supplied by Modern High German than by Gothic. If the student

begins his philological training with Gothic or another far remote Germanic dialect, he has to learn all the new linguistic processes and facts, the new terminology and technical expressions, through the medium of a foreign language quite different from any with which he has as yet been familiar. It is apparent that he meets too many difficulties at once, and his task would be considerably simplified if his first acquaintance with philological methods were gained through a language with which he is already familiar. This would mean proceeding from the familiar to the unfamiliar, instead of going the reverse way by beginning with Gothic and *Urgermanisch* and coming down to Modern High German.

The value of phonetics for linguistic training was recognized a long time ago in France and Germany, and many years of experience in these countries have eliminated every doubt of the usefulness of phonetic studies.

An exhaustive bibliography on phonetics can be found on pages 37 and 38 of Bahlsen, *The Teaching of Modern Languages* (Ginn & Co.). The following titles should be added to Bahlsen's list: Karl Luick, *Deutsche Lautlehre* (Leipzig, 1904); Otto Bremer, *Deutsche Phonetik* (Leipzig, 1903); Wilhelm Viëtor, *German Pronunciation*, third edition (Leipzig, 1903). Also Paul Passy *Petite phonétique comparée des principales langues européennes* (Leipzig, 1906).

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#### VALUE OF PHONETICS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE STUDENT

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The subject presupposes in the present consideration the student of language (German) as opposed to the pure phonetician. The foremost source of inspiration is to be found in the work of Professor Dr. Hermann Klinghardt, who in his *Artikulations- und Höriübungen* (Köthen, 1897) has succeeded in making phonetics of practical value. His message to the conference is one of most cordial greetings and good wishes. In it he says: